

REPORT TO: Cabinet

MEETING DATE: 8 June 2010

BY: Executive Director of Community Services

SUBJECT: The Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To appraise Cabinet Members of progress in supporting The Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust following petitioning to East Lothian Council's Petitions Committee on 21 January 2010.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to:-
- (i) Note this report meantime;
 - (ii) Agree to consider further reports as project discussions progress.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the meeting of the Petitions Committee on 21 January 2010, East Lothian Council considered a Petition presented by Trustees of The Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust, the principal petitioner being Dr Gordon Prestoungrange, Baron of Prestoungrange. The Petition was supported by 12 signatories to the Petition Statement, "*To support the better conservation, interpretation and presentation of the Battle of Prestonpans 1745.*"
- 3.2 The Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust was established in April 2006, with a primary objective to better conserve, interpret and present the historic Battle of Prestonpans in 1745. Since the establishment of the Trust, Trustees have sought how best to articulate all aspects of the Battle interpretation. Acknowledged as being a significant moment in the nation's history, The Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust Trustees believe that it is appropriate that East Lothian Council works in a co-ordinated fashion with the Heritage Trust, the Community Council and other community interest groups to secure the primary objective of the Heritage Trust.

- 3.3 In particular, Trustees were keen to secure joint working to achieve a long-held ambition of creating a Living History Interpretative Centre, it being noted that their initial thinking for such a Centre would likely result in a substantial construction adjacent to the Pyramid at the Meadowmill Centre. However, given the range of challenges to deliver such an objective and acknowledging the significant funds associated with the outline proposals produced to date, that possibility was rendered somewhat unrealistic in the current economic climate. Therefore, a 'Plan B' proposal to perhaps provide living history interpretative facilities at the Prestongrange Mining Museum site might be a mutually beneficial way forward, in order that the primary ambition of the Trustees may be realised along with an opportunity for East Lothian Council to more effectively promote the Prestongrange Industrial Heritage site as a visitor destination.
- 3.4 It is also noted that whilst 'Plan B' may emerge as a preferable option if matters are to progress, The Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust Trustees would not wish to lose sight of the pivotal role that Meadowmill Pyramid can play in providing a viewpoint and orientation of the Battle site, together with appropriate directional signage to the site and accurate interpretation.
- 3.5 Further components of the detail of the Petition presented on 21 January 2010 included:-
- (i) That East Lothian Council agrees to designate a single point of contact from one of its senior officials as a key link to the Trust. It was agreed at the Petitions Committee that the Head of Community Wellbeing would perform this role.
 - (ii) That, within the next 12 months, East Lothian Council will undertake to:-
 - Create and amend street signage to the Battle Bing/Pyramid, including signage on the A1.
 - Create an interpretation board at the foot of the Bing/Pyramid.
 - Refurbish the interpretation boards at the summit of the Bing/Pyramid.
 - Clear the woodland area at the base of the Bing/Pyramid of all detritus material.
 - Place, where possible, new litter bins at the foot of the Bing/Pyramid.
 - Repair the posts and chains that encompass the obelisk to Colonel Gardiner, adjacent to Bankton House, and ensure that the area is regularly maintained.
 - (iii) To seek to work with East Lothian Council to ensure that when development proposals are progressed on the Blindwells settlement

site recognition is included of the Riggonhead Defile (this being the route that the Prince's Highland Clans used to advance overnight prior to their attack on 21 September 1745).

- (iv) That East Lothian Council co-operates with The Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust to assist in possible externally funded improvements to the Waggonway (Scotland's first railway) and effective interpretation of the site, together with targeted promotion to highlight the route as a walking and cycling path.
- 3.6 The Petitions Committee, having heard and discussed the content of the Petition, agreed that the Council would, in principle, be willing to support the objectives of The Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust and that the Head of Community Wellbeing would bring a report to the attention of the Council's Cabinet prior to the 2010 Summer Recess.
- 3.7 Since the Petitions Committee, the Head of Community Wellbeing, together with other Council officials, has been having ongoing dialogue with The Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust and has attended, where possible and appropriate, meetings of the Trust. Arising from the ongoing discussions, arrangements are in hand to address the straightforward physical aspects contained within the Petition.
- 3.8 The Manager of Projects and Asset Management is having the interpretation boards examined at the summit of the Pyramid, together with examination of the perimeter posts and chains at the obelisk to Colonel Gardiner.
- 3.9 Amenity Services are maintaining the woodland area and are routinely maintaining open space at the Pyramid and at Colonel Gardiner's site, adjacent to Bankton House.
- 3.10 It should be noted that no budgetary provision is available for such activities and that any additional works require to be accommodated within existing resources.
- 3.11 The Council's Policy & Project Manager predicts no difficulty in ensuring that the historical significance of the Riggonhead Defile can be recognised as part of the Blindwells development framework (advising that street naming can be considered along with appropriate provision of public artworks). It is further noted that the Council's Heritage Officer has contributed substantial commentary on the historic site and also considers it appropriate and, indeed, essential that appropriate interpretation and promotion be secured as part of the Blindwells settlement development framework.
- 3.12 Discussions are ongoing with The Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust to hopefully enable the Waggonway project to proceed.
- 3.13 A meeting has been arranged between The Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust Trustees, Council Members and officials on site at Prestongrange to examine the possibilities of a joint project being promoted on this site. It should be noted, however, that there is no

provision within the Capital Plan for this project and that discussions can only be held in principle and in outline at this stage, until such time as the Council formally considers the possible incorporation of such a project within its Capital Planning arrangements. Given present financial circumstances, it has to be accepted that such consideration may be some time off.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Council association with The Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust will assist in the delivery of the Council's Heritage Strategy 2007.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 **Financial** - Council officials will work and co-operate as far as practicably possible with The Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust Trustees in an effort to identify external funding sources to finance possible future project development.
- 6.2 **Personnel** - None.
- 6.3 **Other** - None.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Petitions Committee Report and Minute – 21 January 2010.

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